

Sustainable Tiverton Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for vulnerable adults, children and young people (hereafter referred to as 'vulnerable users' in this document) who attend activities and events organised by Sustainable Tiverton.
- To provide volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect vulnerable users may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

2. General statement:

- There is a moral obligation and legal duty of care that we do whatever is reasonably practicable to ensure the safety and wellbeing of anyone, including vulnerable users, with whom we work.
- All vulnerable users, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

3. In order to safeguard vulnerable users, Sustainable Tiverton will:

- Provide a safe physical environment for all participants, including vulnerable users.
- Put in place risk assessments for all activities. These are to be drawn up by, and as a minimum, shared with, activity leaders.
- Summary risk assessments will be appropriately displayed for volunteers in order for them to familiarise themselves with base line requirements and procedures.
- Details of a designated First Aid Contact person to be clearly displayed at all events with over 90 participants.
- Details of a named Safeguarding First Contact to be clearly displayed at all events.
- Participants to be aware of the need to report any concerns relating to safeguarding to the named Safeguarding First Contact in the first instance.
- Liaise with appropriate services and agencies in the event of a safeguarding issue.
- Manage confidentiality and personal data protection appropriately.
- Review and update this Safeguarding Policy annually or sooner if required by circumstances.

Definitions:

Safeguarding is everyone's business. It depends on people understanding and doing the following things:

1. being aware of the risks of abuse and neglect that vulnerable users can face
2. knowing what help is available
3. understanding their responsibilities
4. working together to report and cooperate with any investigation by professional agencies
5. working together to prevent abuse and neglect.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other persons(s) or group of people. Abuse may be single or repeated acts. It can be:

- **Physical:** for example, hitting, slapping, burning, pushing, restraining or giving the wrong medication.
- **Psychological and emotional:** for example, shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring or humiliating a person, threats of harm or abandonment, intimidation, verbal abuse or manipulating person to take part in acts that they do not wish to.
- **Financial:** including the illegal or unauthorised use of a person's property, money or other valuables.
- **Sexual:** such as forcing a person to take part in any sexual activity without his or her informed consent. Sexual intercourse with any person below the Age of Consent (16 years of age) is illegal.
- **Discriminatory:** including any physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which targets the gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion, disability or age of the victim, having the

purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, degrading or offensive environment.

- **Institutional:** the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people.
- **Neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical or physical care needs.

Children and Young People: any child up to their 18th birthday

Vulnerable Adults: any adult at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support

Procedures for safe working:

Direct supervision:

- Sustainable Tiverton welcomes vulnerable users of all ages at any event, including accompanied children and young people under the age of 16. They remain the responsibility of the accompanying parent or carer at all times.
- Where organisations such as schools, youth clubs or Scouting Association groups wish to participate in Sustainable Tiverton events, children or young people are the responsibility of that organisation at all times.
- 16 and 17 year olds are not considered vulnerable if they are in volunteering or employment situations.

Risk assessments and Health & Safety:

- All activities are to be preceded by a risk assessment.
- Any accidents or incidents will be recorded in the risk assessment amendment sheet.
- Any Safeguarding concerns will be reported in the first instance to the Safeguarding First Contact
- In events where it is anticipated that there may be more than 90 participants, there will be a designated person responsible for any first aid incidents.
- Use of tools will be age and ability appropriate.
- The CAG Project public liability insurance covers all activities of the group including working with children and tool use.

Photography and filming:

- Parents/guardians will be asked for signed permission to take photos or films of their children.
- Never take pictures or film anyone without permission. When taking photos or filming in a public place, make it clear that you are taking photos/filming and give those who do not wish to be included time to move out of shot.
- Obtain signed permission from all adults and parents/guardians if images may be shared in any public forum such as social media.

Conduct:

- Volunteers working with children are under a legal duty of care which case law has interpreted as a duty to 'act as a careful parent'.
 - If the conduct from any adult is witnessed to be inappropriate the activity should be concluded immediately and make it clear to the individual that their action is unacceptable. If the practice is repeated, the volunteer should no longer be allowed to attend the sessions, and due consideration given to reporting for investigation (see below). A record of any person not allowed to participate due to unacceptable conduct should be kept in the Sustainable Tiverton 'accidents & incidents' book.
 - If there is a Safeguarding concern this will be reported in the first instance to the Safeguarding First Contact
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Recruitment of Volunteers and Training:

- Volunteers who are responsible for supervising activities will undertake appropriate training. They will be familiar with risk assessments and safeguarding policy and procedures relating to their activity. They will know how to reach a Safeguarding First Contact in case of any concerns.
- All volunteers will be encouraged to read the summary risk assessments and safeguarding policy and the related procedures displayed at events.
- In the rare event that a volunteering opportunity includes work that involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults and children– known as Regulated Activity (see Appendix 4) – then an organisation must check whether the volunteer is included in either of the two DBS ‘barred lists’ of individuals who are unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. This is a legal responsibility for the recruiting organisation and it is a criminal offence for a person to seek or carry out work in activities from which they are barred.

Recording information and confidentiality:

- The confidentiality of vulnerable users will be respected wherever possible and their parent or carer’s consent will be obtained to share information unless there is a medical emergency or safeguarding concern when there is a requirement that relevant information is passed to a professional agency.
- Personal data security will be managed according to the Sustainable Tiverton Data Protection policy.
- Specifically, personal data recorded in the event of safeguarding concerns will be restricted to information required during investigation of those concerns and shared only on a ‘need to know’ basis with professional agencies. It will be stored confidentially online under password protection and not on any personal equipment. Online access and passwords will be restricted to two nominated Safeguarding First Contacts.

Recognising concerns or evidence of abuse

Concerns about or evidence of abuse might be raised through:

- A direct disclosure by the vulnerable user
- A complaint or expression of concern by another volunteer, carer/parent/guardian or a member of the public
- An observation of the behaviour of the vulnerable user by the volunteer.

In the event of a safeguarding concern, volunteers should discuss with the named Safeguarding First Contact or in their absence directly with the relevant authorities as detailed in **section 4** below.

Dealing with abuse discovered, disclosed or alleged:

Action must be taken immediately in ALL cases. Do not assume someone else will act. It is the responsibility of the volunteer becoming aware of a situation to:

Make Safe:

- Deal with the immediate needs of the vulnerable user. This may mean taking reasonable steps to ensure the person is in no immediate danger and seek medical treatment if required.
- Report any concerns to the named Safeguarding First Contact in the first instance. Do not discuss the allegation of abuse with any other volunteers, group members, parents/carers or the alleged perpetrator.
- If a volunteer is involved in the allegation or concern, or they have been witnessed behaving in a way that caused or could cause harm to vulnerable users then they must be removed from the activity immediately and suspended from volunteering whilst an investigation takes place. The member of staff or volunteer should be treated fairly and honestly with reassurance that this removal does not imply any guilt, but is to protect them as much as the person making the allegation. The relevant agencies will take responsibility for investigations.

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Respond to the person who made the disclosure by:

- **Reassuring** them that they have done the right thing.
- Giving them time to talk without probing, pushing or asking leading questions. Investigation is the responsibility of *other* relevant agencies.
- Avoiding making promises you will be unable to keep, including that discussions are confidential.
- Explaining to the person that you will share this information with the relevant agencies only.

Record:

Record what was said before it is forgotten and keep it somewhere secure until it can be entered in the Sustainable Tiverton 'accidents and incidents' book. The record should include:

- The date, time and location the disclosure was made.
- The allegation or concerns, including the date and time of the incident and what the vulnerable user said in their own words.
- The appearance and behaviour of the vulnerable user including any injuries observed.
- The actions taken.

Inform:

- **If there is a safeguarding concern that needs urgent attention or current risk to safety, the nominated First Contact should ring the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) team in the first instance immediately on: 0345 155 1071 (out of hours 0845 6000 388)**
- The vulnerable user and/or their family/carer should normally be informed before a referral is made and their consent sought. However this should not happen if it might place the vulnerable user at greater risk of abuse.
- The duty worker will advise on the next steps and the volunteer may be asked to fill in a referral form. MASH staff can discuss a case where there is uncertainty and whether a referral is needed. An example of an urgent situation might be:
 - A child or young person discloses physical or sexual abuse
 - If there are signs of physical abuse e.g. injury
 - A child presents as very different/scared to go home/anxious

Contacts/further advice

For general safeguarding advice, volunteers can seek support from **Care Direct on 0345 155 1007**. Care Direct is open to take calls between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays.

- Only contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed, the vulnerable user is in immediate danger of abuse or an assault is taking place, in which case call 999.
- Providing the volunteer who has handled the disclosure has followed the procedures above to ensure the safety of the vulnerable user, they should keep all information about the disclosure confidential other than to report concerns to the relevant authorities or the named Safeguarding First Contact.
- Volunteers who have handled the disclosure may find this distressing and should have access to support. The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is available 24 hours a day and provides counselling, information and advice for anyone concerned about/accused of child abuse. NSPCC Helpline number 0808 800 5000.

Nominated Safeguarding First Contacts @ October 2020:

Peter Stott Weston House, 6 Luke St, Bampton, EX169NF

01398 332094 07958 176799

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Appendices: Information for group leaders and interested volunteers

Appendix 1: Video Introduction to Child Protection and Safeguarding:

A short video for Devon volunteers covering the basics of child protection and safeguarding including: types of abuse, signs and symptoms of abuse, consequences of abuse, taking action and who to contact if you have concerns.

Target group: Staff or volunteers in infrequent/irregular contact with children, young people and/or parents/ carers who may become aware of possible abuse or neglect or observe situations which cause them to be concerned.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkxu5KjrW8U>

Appendix 2: Warning Signs of child abuse and neglect.

The signs of child abuse aren't always obvious, and a child might not tell anyone what's happening to them. Children might be scared that the abuser will find out, or worry that the abuse will get worse. They might think that there's no-one they can tell or that they won't be believed. Sometimes, children don't even realise that what's happening is abuse.

Warning signs of emotional abuse:

- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
- Shows extremes in behaviour (extremely compliant, demanding, passive, aggressive)
- Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver
- Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums)

Warning signs of physical abuse:

- Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts
- Is always watchful and "on alert," as if waiting for something bad to happen
- Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt
- Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home
- Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days

Warning signs of child neglect:

- Clothes are ill-fitting, filthy, or inappropriate for the weather
- Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odour)
- Untreated illnesses and physical injuries
- Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations
- Is frequently late or missing from school

Warning signs of sexual abuse in children:

- Trouble walking or sitting
- Displays knowledge of sexual acts inappropriate to their age, or even seductive behavior

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- Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason
- Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities
- An STD or pregnancy, especially under the age of 14
- Runs away from home

Appendix 3: Warning Signs of adult abuse and neglect.

Physical Abuse or Neglect

- Multiple bruises, burns, sores etc, malnutrition, untreated medical problems, over-sedation

Psychological and Emotional Abuse

- Fear, hopelessness, exhaustion, unexpected or unexplained change in behaviour

Financial and Material Abuse

Unpaid bills, unexplained shortage of money, lack of funds to provide basic food and clothes etc

Appendix 4: Regulated Activity requiring volunteer DBS checks³

- In relation to supervising volunteer children and young people **under the age of 16**, Regulated Activity only applies to roles involving teaching, training, caring for, supervising, advising on well-being or driving a vehicle, and only when the role is carried out **regularly** (defined as 'by the same person once a week or more open)
- In relation to activities with adults, Regulated Activity only applies to roles involving health care, personal care, social work, assisting with financial transactions, legal actions or transport for the above.

Further reading and guidance can be found in the NCVO online publication 'Safeguarding for volunteer involving organisations' at

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/keeping/ncvosafeguardingforvolunteerinvolvingorgs.pdf>